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LAKE SAN CHRISTOBAL
Hinsdale County, Colorado
Altitude 10,000 feet.

A Midnight Reverie

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FEB 24 1928

PREFACE

At the close of that unrighteous and unnecessary conflict, known as the Civil War, thousands of young men who perhaps would never have left their native farms, found themselves free and foot loose; they had accustomed themselves to the life of the camp and the search for danger. The sanctity of home life had been broken up; the Northern soldier was loath to return to the bleak New England hills and the Southern soldier had no home to which he might return. The glamour of the west, with its possibilities of adventure and danger, lured them, and where the mind is directed the feet soon follow, so that within a few years after the war, the disbanded soldiers of the two armies, pursuing the same adventures and resisting the same dangers, met in the west as friends.

It was only the politicians, camp followers, and recruits who kept up the bitterness of the war for thirty years after it had closed.

Incident to the extension of the railroad systems westward, another class of citizens was scattered over the plains and through the mountains; then in quick succession followed the cattle craze, the mining craze, the farming craze, and the irrigation craze. As these several waves swept westward over the mighty inland empire, which in a few decades will dominate the political and religious thought of the world, and broke on the Pacific Coast, the ebbing flood left stranded in the recesses of the mountain chains and on the broad plains, thousands of men who either from choice or necessity were compelled to remain and become permanent citizens. These people were drawn from all parts of the earth and represented every shade of thought that agitates the mind of man, and here in the West, untrammeled by the narrow environments of the East, the discussion of these subjects was free and unrestrained, discussion led to investigation and investigation to conviction, so that the general opinion on many subjects was materially changed. To such an extent as this change had been made that the difference in the platforms of the two great political parties can hardly be noticed by a Socialist. The change in religious thought has been more radical and widespread; thousands of men who from policy still adhere to the regulations and control of a moribund religion, secretly, and tens of thousands openly, have discarded the idea of an anthropomorphous God as untenable, and contrary to the results of scientific investigations, and the pretended authority and revelation appertaining to it, have advanced into the broad light of the religion of humanity, which recognizes as God that unknowable and unthinkable IT which created and rules the universe. It recognizes no country, no people and no individual, but seeks only to do good. Its object is to abate superstition, poverty, and crime, and to alleviate suffering wherever it may be found. Its only law is the Golden Rule and its limit of thought and action is only bounded where it invades the rights of another individual. To point out the course of reasoning by which these changes have been made has been the object of the present work.

PERSEVERE.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE.—The original photographs for the engravings for this book were unavoidably omitted and the engravings herein were loaned by Messrs. Stanchfield and Blare.

DEDICATION

To the Memory of my dearly-beloved Sister, who taught my infant footsteps to tread the thorny path of life, who was my companion for many years, and whose indefatigable researches into the dark and almost forgotten past I am indebted for many of the facts presented in this work, the only one whom I implicitly trusted, who never betrayed my confidence, this work is dedicated.

Sweet were the hours in sacred study spent,
In every cult we sought with truth to meet,
But all alike in superstition blent,
We rest in peace, perhaps is thought most sweet.

Why were we born if we forever sleep,
In Hervey's Tombs we sought for a reply,
And asked the stars who occult secrets keep,
The echo mocked us with the question, Why?

What Jesus taught the Buddist taught before,
Philosophy from earth all crime would blot,
But if we judge by numbers less or more,
We may suppose, it does not matter what.

Alone she treads the path beyond the grave
That leads beneath the shadow of the throne
No warning voice comes back to me to save,
In darkness now I tread my path alone.

A Midnight Reverie

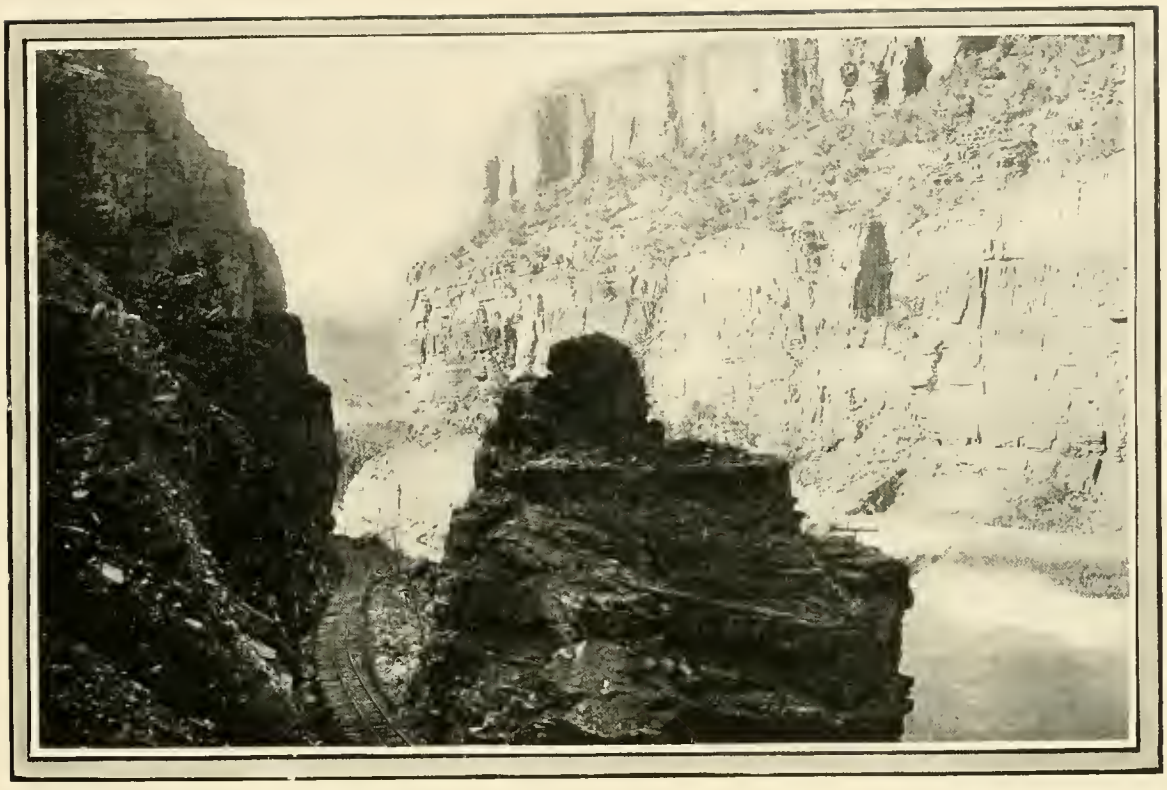
INTRODUCTION

How beautiful the mountains are at night,
When moonlight falls on silent vales and peaks;
The stars look down with undiminished light,
From every side the voice of nature speaks.

On such a night, before I go to rest,
With slothful step I climb the mountain side
And, sitting where I view the mountain's crest,
I ponder there the fate that all betide.

When dim and weird the trembling shadows creep,
By smiling moon on spreading landscape thrown,
And silence reigns, though gentle breezes sweep,
Then shrinks the mind before its fate unknown.

Whence Bor'as blows his oft time chilly breath,
Aurora's pause and blushes oft are seen,
Like course of life which only leads to death,
They flash and die, and there is naught between.



Beneath the arch where shine the stars so bright,
Dame Nature's work magnificent appears;
What centuries have winged their weary flight,
To shape these hills and vales with nature's tears?

What lapse of time may yet these mountains see?
Where is the one who did all this create?
'Till from the form the waiting soul is free,
The mind must doubt what is to be its fate.

I wish I could the mystery unroll,
The skillful hands I too would touch the lyre.
To satisfy the great desire of soul
Which bound to earth would yet approach its sire.

The paradise of which blind Milton sang
And Dante's home for those who do transgress,
The well-known Gods whose praises oft have rang,
Present no facts, but only fear impress.

My searching thoughts the universe explore,
    Before the curse fell on the human race,
In voiceless void, the sea without a shore,
    Eternity applied to time and space.

I seem to float upon a drifting cloud,
    With speed of light I am through space advanced,
Among the stars that round the circlet crowd,
    And eons pass while there I sit entranced.

I reach at last the now most distant star,
    And far beyond my piercing glance I bend,
And points of light I yet may see afar—
    If there be space then space can have no end.

The dream is past, the truth we must accept,
    For God has willed from mortal ken to hide,
Until we sleep with those who long have slept,
    The holy place in which It does abide.

'Tis useless then, to probe the void beyond,
The bound is set, the limit well defined,
To find a God of whom we may be fond,
Who will requite the prayer of human kind.

There is a point beyond we cannot pass
And from the void no voice was ever heard,
We cannot tell how grows a blade of grass
Or know the will of It that speaks no word.

But we can view the acts and thoughts of men,
In every land wherever they have tried,
To solve the doubt, existing now as then,
For all the hordes that ever lived or died.

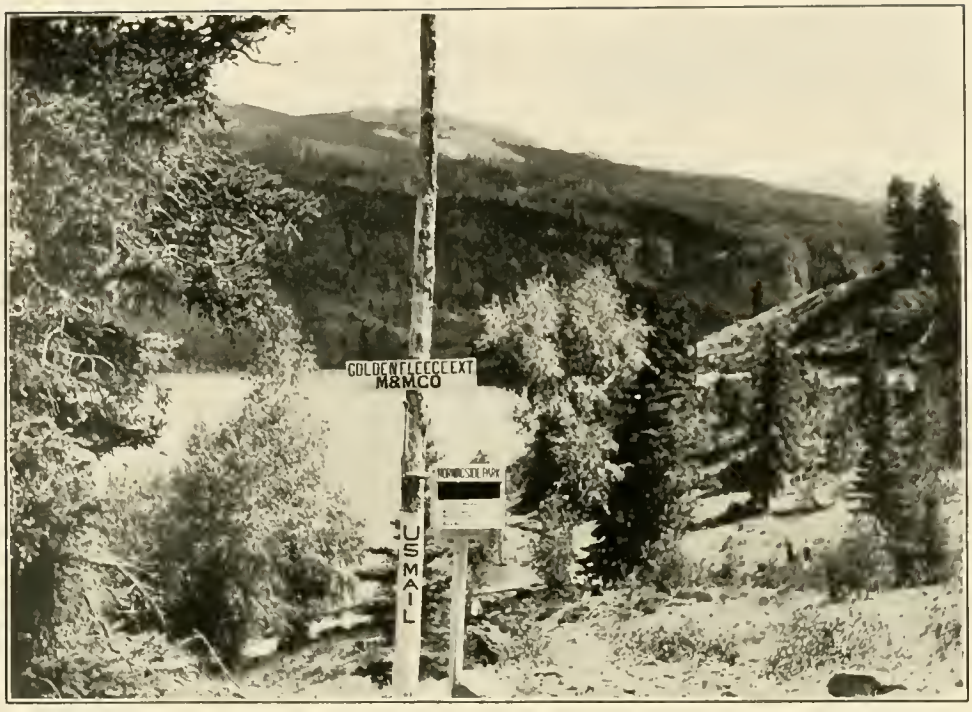
I, therefore, search the books of ancient lore
And gather facts from all the ages past,
Awake from sleep the Gods men had before
And fiction then with truth in balance cast.

For prejudice will always warp the mind
And likewise hope will lead us far astray;
I search for truth in every cult I find—
Truth does not fear the searching light of day.

I follow close the paths great minds have trod,
Who in the past by pretense most absurd,
Who did create a great though human God,
Through whom they ruled the ever thoughtless herd.

I view with care the prospect here outspread
And listen to the voices that I hear,
I try to find the path that all must tread
And read the book of nature far and near.

And first I will the landscape here inspect
And then the sky with nature's simple plan,
On fate of soul continually reflect
And then compare the acts and thoughts of man.



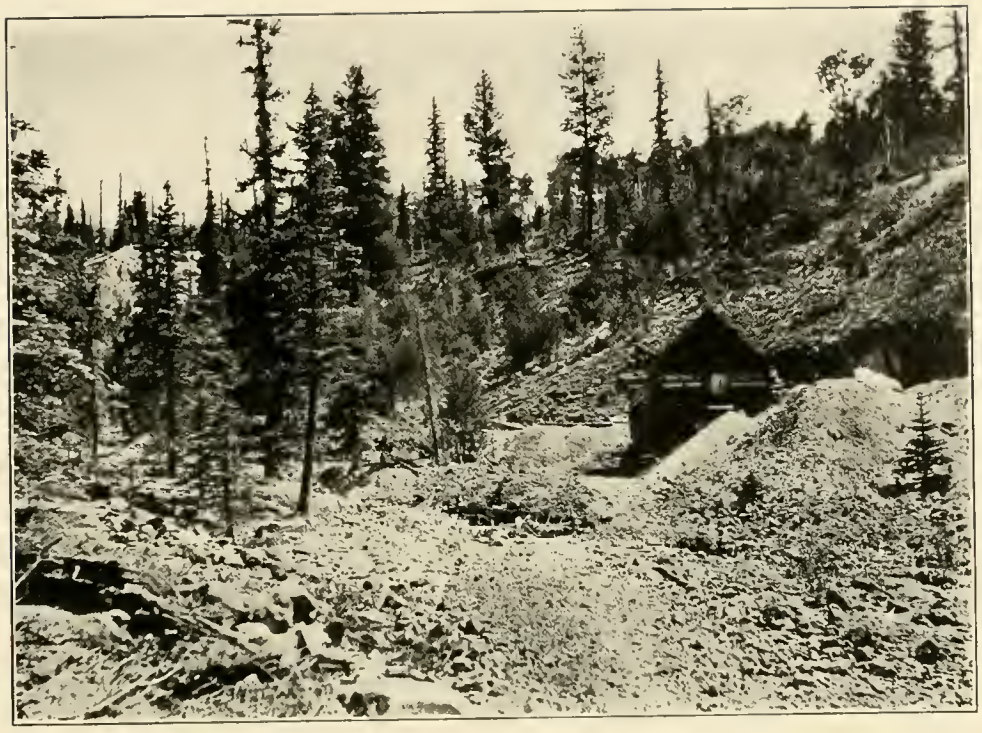
THE GULCH

A twisting gulch and stream in front are seen
And just beyond the lofty peaks upraise,
The hills around are clothed in living green,
And far above the constellations blaze.

This winding gulch with sides of varied hue,
Was slowly carved through such a lapse of time
That we need not in useless thought pursue,
But stand in awe of nature's work sublime.

But nature oft will move with feverish haste,
The earthquake shock this solid rock will rend,
At other times a century will waste
To groove a place where torrents may descend.

These rounded hills, geologists agree,
Were once apart a wide extended plain,
Internal heat a molten mass set free
And raise the earth that forms the mountain chain.



The solid earth in fissures opened wide
And some are filled with metals that we prize,
To smooth the mass the falling waters tried
And form the lakes from which the streamlets rise.

For unknown time did heat and water blend,
To raise, to break, to crumble, and rebuild,
And ice and snow a helping hand did lend
And valleys deep with debris thus were filled.

Then for a time did lazy nature rest,
A little time, a million years or more,
Then once again the rock-crowned peaks attest
The flames burst forth as active as before.

Once more the clouds absorb the gas and smoke,
The stars alone, beheld the lurid flame,
The lightning's voice in fearful accents broke
And from above torrential waters came.

Then silence reigned, save for the rushing flood,
No cry of beast, no joyful voice of bird,
The lofty vails were lakes of ice or mud
Where only then thunder tones were heard.

'Twas nature's task the lava crust to break
And filled the floes with glacier ice between,
Which ground the rock a fertile soil to make,
Ere rounded hills could don their coats of green.

Two thousand feet have crumbled into dust
And slowly spread to form the fertile vale,
This ponderous mass through narrow gorge was thrust,
The rocks themselves reveal the simple tale.

That nature's work is slowly going on,
The constant chuck of moving boulders prove,
Which double force along the stream has drawn.
And through the gulch forever downward move.

Eternal change! thus nature is expressed,
    These rocks dissolve to fructify the plain
And if the soul with other life is blest,
    Why may it not a higher sphere attain?

We speak of soul as something we possess,
    Although the mind does every act control,
We cannot then a meaning well express
    Of that which we denominate the soul.

In every mind three voices true reside,
    One may present, another may dispute,
The third one then the matter will decide—
    When judgment acts, the other two are mute.

But soul of man may be like soul of beast,
    There are no facts from history to draw,
For those who rule, the king, the seer, the priest,
    Did never rule except by human law.

Because we read among these cloven spires,
A record true of what there must have been,
For Vulcan long had quenched his fiercest fire,
Ere Adam came to drench the world in sin.

And as we read, this startling fact is shown,
That Adam's God was not the only one,
This pleasing land to him was never known,
Some other god this mighty work hath done.

It may have been the unknown land of Nod,
Where Adam might platonic wife have found,
He did not know there was another god,
'Till Abel's blood provoked the virgin ground.

When Adam's God gave to the man his mate,
And to the man instructions did rehearse,
To shield the pair from Nature's *sinful* fate,
He did for them the law of life reverse.

'Twas Adam's God who gave the Jews a king,
Of priestly rule it seems that they were tired,
It may be wrong to mention such a thing,
The worst of them is called the most inspired

But from the king he turned away his face,
And never did authority renew,
No earthly king can claim to own the place
That Adam's God gave to the savage Jew.

Upon the weak the wives their thoughts impose
And hold their place through superstitious fear,
To trusting youth they doubtful tales disclose,
So falsehood then may as a truth appear.

Adam's God events could not foresee,
Nor did he hint about a future life,
Unlike the Son who cursed the barren tree,
He cursed the man because he *knew* his wife.

THE RIVER

On either hand a valley far extends,
    Through which a stream of crystal water flows,
A raging flood, a torrent it descends,
    When it is swelled with Winter's melting snow.

Where Winter piles his icy breath in drifts,
    And wind and cloud in nature's war contend,
When Spring the hand of Winter gently lifts,
    The frozen streams once more together blend.

From banks of snow the river takes its start,
    The little streams unite and downward leap,
With others there they to the sea depart
    And swells the tide beneath the clouds that weep.

In gloomy gulch, where all these waters meet,
    They dance, and swirl, and sparkle in their might;
The shadows change, reverse themselves complete.
    With light and shade contending through the night.

The burning sun did from the ocean draw
This rushing flood which hastens to return,
And he who seeks a key to Nature's Law,
Can hardly fail the secret here to learn.

Thus life consists in doing little things,
Which like the streams unite and pass away,
But will the One who back the river brings,
Return the soul to dwell in senseless clay?

The parted soul some other form may take,
From whence it came it may at once return.
The silent sky did ne'er an answer make,
But after death we may the secret learn.

For God, who kills, may form or soul restore,
So that in peace we journey on the way,
With hope and trust we calmly look before,
Beyond the tomb may be the fairest day.

On mountain's crest the river had its start,
    Through forest glades and where the stream is deep,
Smoothly it flows, and then, with swift descent
    And joyous mirth, the laughing water sweeps.

It seems in haste from mountain home to flee,
    But will return as drifting rain or snow,
How great and wise the Unknown One must be
    Who made the law that causes wind to blow.

For well we know that nothing came by chance,
    We know the law that changes wood to coal,
Why may we not the theory advance
    That there is law that does apply to soul?

As broken rocks impede the river's flow,
    So stumbling blocks along our path abide,
As ice conceals the living stream below,
    Within the form a conscious soul may hide.

Far up the vale now like a silver thread,
The winding course of river is in view
And just beyond a placid lake is spread,
From which the stream will take its life anew.

From thence increase the river swiftly glides,
'Till it is forced between restraining walls,
The broken rock the angry stream derides,
A mass of foam far down below it falls.

Where waters swirl and lash themselves to spray,
Hang fleecy clouds through which the moonbeams glow,
As back and forth the breezes gently sway,
Reflected light presents the Promise Bow.

This lovely scene our close attention draws,
Because the priests have otherwise explained,
They little knew concerning Nature's Laws,
But by deceit their station have retained.

For it would seem that fables of this kind,
Have ever been the priestly stock in trade,
By which they sought to subjugate the mind
Of those o'er whom their scepter they have swayed.

Around the myth of fabled New Year's birth
The story of the Christian Gods was built,
One came, they said, and gave to them the earth,
A man of peace for whom much blood they spilt.

But every cult on something must be based,
In ancient times great men were changed to gods,
But earnest men the stories all have traced,
And they affirm they were but priestly frauds.

And everyone improved upon the past,
Adopting that which gave them greater force.
Around the birth of Great Reformer cast,
A cloud of myth derived from pagan source.

NATURE'S CHANGE

In sweet repose the lovely valley lies,
Though up and down the zephyrs gently blow,
Which bring to one, a searcher of the skies,
Dame Nature's voice in accent sad and low.

The distant stream whose murmuring I hear,
The saddest days of memory recall,
The soughing voice of fragrant spruces near,
In measured tones now slowly rise and fall.

A falling tree disturbs the restful peace,
The time had come when it should pass away.
And falling rocks the varied sounds increase—
The mountain mass is crumbling in decay.

That thunder sound which echoes from afar,
The distant fall of ice-bound rock reveals;
The curving path of brilliant shooting star,
With greater glow the moon almost conceals.

Whence came that star that for a moment burned,
In ages past, was it so far out-thrown,
That only now to die it has returned,
Or did it come from distant world unknown?

Between the orbs of Jupiter and Mars,
Ages, perhaps, before the time of man,
Another one among the moving stars,
Along its course in beauty may have ran.

The asteroids now occupy the space
And may be seen along the midnight sky
Where Kepler's law another world would place,
With double proof of planets' death supply.

Thus Nature moves, with slow but steadfast tread,
A broken world with others may compare,
It may have been for countless ages dead,
Among the rest, it may have been most fair.

Around those suns whose tinted light is shed,
May circle worlds with life most strange and odd,
There may be suns from which the life has fled,
And countless worlds unknown to all but God.

Those fancied forms outlined by points of light
Have long remained, as they perhaps, were placed,
For since the time that each received a name,
The shepherds' eye with ease their forms have traced.

Enchantment's charm now holds each shining sphere,
Across the sky their giant forms revolve,
The ancient gods whose worship was sincere,
Will they be there when earths with heat dissolve?

No "still small voice" will bring you answer back,
But we may judge and then the point is clear,
If died the world that moved in Kepler's track,
The universe in time may disappear.

Meteors that are like torches hurled,
By angry gods who are not now employed,
And oft a time flash like a shining world,
May be the fragrance of some world destroyed.

Our little earth through fearful ordeals passed;
The outer crust has frequently been changed.
The rocks at first in solid form were cast,
Then broken up and often rearranged.

Around the earth was superheated steam,
The atmosphere was full of noxious gas,
As moves the tide upon a swollen stream,
So ebbed and flowed the semi-liquid mass.

The surplus heat in stellar space was lost,
And from above torrential waters fell,
But 'till the rocks retain the Winter's frost,
No human life upon the earth could dwell.

In ages past, against these broken crags,
Old ocean's surf its foaming head did lift;
Between the hills where now the valley sags,
The ebbing flood the loosened rocks would rift.

But from the land the ocean did withdraw,
Across the waste the seeding breezes blew,
The fertile earth, obeying Nature's Law,
Was clothed with trees and verdure fresh and new.

But then the new springs ever from the old,
These wooded hills are crumbling to the plain.
And falling trees must sink into the mold,
Where trees will grow as long as trees remain.

But will a change come to the craven soul?
When from the frame by death it is set free?
If Nature's law continues in control,
A change of form will with this law agree.

And we may judge, if we do have a soul,
That God will hark unto its humble plea,
Or it may drift while countless ages roll,
Within the depths of unknown, shoreless sea.

For all things change, but has it reached the goal?
Will Nature's God another life supply,
Or like a worm does man cocoon a soul
That will have wings as does the butterfly?

The mystery of life and death to solve,
"The first and last" of every living soul,
The fate of man and universe involved,
"When all the skies shall roll up like a scroll."

For what was once, may be again once more,
The prophets' word may therefore be fulfilled
The One who built the universe before,
May it destroy and then once more rebuild.

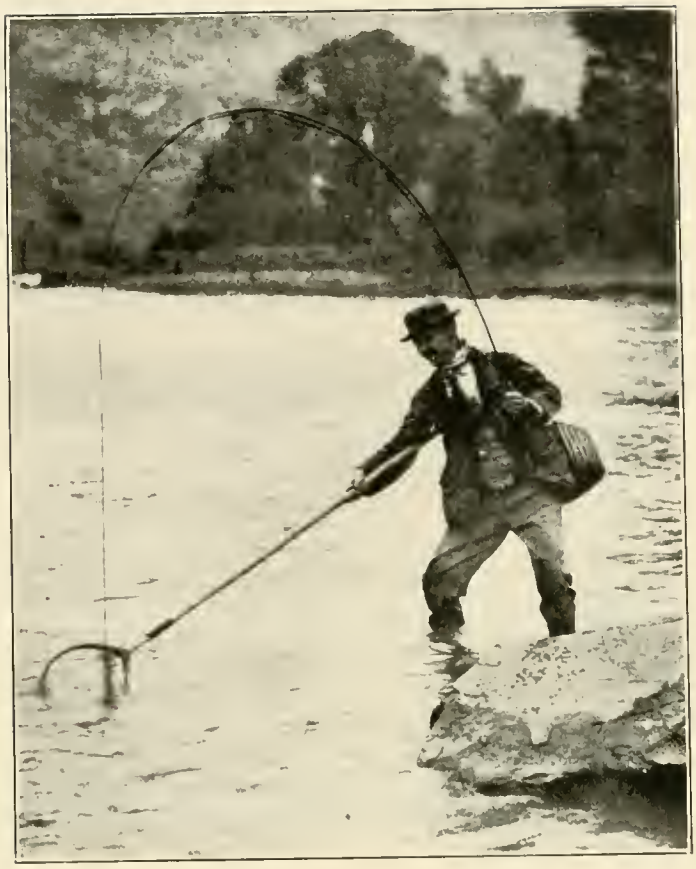
THE GRAVEYARD

Beneath my feet a mining village stands,
And placed beyond, where dimly now is spied,
Are graves of those from near and distant lands.
Their epitaph? They struggled, lived, and died.

There rest the men who did all dangers brave
And blazed the trails, fortune or fame to seek.
Each found at last his now forgotten grave,
Of name or fame men seldom ever speak.

The bauble fame for which ambition strives,
Gave some a day of manhood's greatest pride.
And fortune came to gladden other lives,
In search of which the most of them have died.

Among the forms that now are resting there,
Some pondered deep upon their future faith
Some often sought of God Its love and care,
But other views some lives did regulate.



Their hopes, their fears, their frailties too were known,
For men are prone their virtues to profess,
Some passed away through errors they had sown,
Some sought the grave as solace from distress.

By Nature's law they came into their life.
For certain time they proudly held their way.
Some lived in peace, and others lived in strife.
But all at last did Nature's law obey.

From every clime they wandered here and died,
And wrapped in earth their lonely vigil keep.
O'er nameless graves the pine trees long have sighed,
If they awake how long will be their sleep?

If they had souls, where do their souls now stray?
Do they await in Hades eternal blight?
Or by that Throne, when earth has passed away,
Where God Supreme shall justify the right?

I've sought to read the answer in the sky
And peer beyond the portals of the grave,
From out the void there came back no reply,
But all around a certain answer gave.

The elements are constantly employed,
And Nature's law we hear with ease may learn,
Death changes all, but nothing is destroyed,
What comes from earth must to the earth return.

Like Autumn leaves the flesh to earth must change
For every life some funeral bell will toll,
In certain lines we may our lives arrange,
But we must doubt the faith of waiting soul.

Environment holds us with iron hand;
Heredity gives color to the mind;
Our destiny we cannot understand,
A second life the soul may never find.

But it would seem that nature does prolong
The lives of those who moderation learn,
And punish those who wilfully do wrong,
But fate of soul we cannot thus discern.

Wise men have sought to tear the mask from death,
Its cold embrace, its terrors to relieve,
And sought to sooth the pang of parting breath,
By simple tales themselves did not believe.

Thus did the priests who lived in days of old,
Whose worship was with highest art refined,
Who ruled the herd by stories which they told,
And useless rites that would debase the mind.

And some then taught that soul would dwell in beast,
For certain time, till it was purified,
Just like the tale that since is told by priest,
That God Supreme for pigmy men has died.

REFLECTION

From constant roar of distant waterfall,
    Where pours the flood in seething mass below.
The echoes run along the mountain wall,
    As faint and fast as memory's afterglow.

And I recall the stories I have heard,
    By cultured men in many a sermon told,
Of wondrous things to read in holy word,
    And treasured then as misers treasure gold.

How simple was the humble prayer at night,
    When kneeling by a pious mother's knee!
How can the face, when closed the eyes so bright
    In peaceful sleep, from care and sorrow free!

Most happy they whose simple, faithful trust,
    Compel their walk in honor's narrow path,
For should their hopes all perish with the dust,
    They have no fear of death or future wrath.

The right today, tomorrow may be wrong,
For human laws are subject to decay,
Fair science now with swiftness moves along,
And priestly lore has caused the long delay.

Most sweet and sad are stories learned in youth,
Which in our age much confirmation lack,
Once more the stars I search and seek for truth,
When memory calls and they come trooping back.

Across the sky some sacred form was traced,
And fasts and feasts the seasons' change express,
By every god some specious tale was placed
And hope and fear the ignorant repressed.

For always hope is thus entwined with fear,
We do suppose some power will prevent
The evil which to us seems drawing near,
Or give us that on which we are intent.

The story told of Virgin bearing Child,
Among the myths is very old and quaint,
Some modern priest the simple folk beguiled
And changed the Child and Virgin both to saint.

In wondrous birth on which they love to dwell,
I only see a simple maiden's fault,
For often maids unwisely love too well,
If one is saint, why not the rest exalt?

These simple tales which may some truth impart,
Made hope of life and baseless fear of Hell,
So sad a tale as sacred, bleeding heart,
If learned in youth, long in the mind will dwell.

The birth, the death, the resurrection, now,
Were symbols first of oft returning sun,
Where they were changed, all students must allow,
Was ever placed where flourished priest and nun.

In sunny lands the garland victim lead,
And Memnon sang to Hores of the morn,
In northern lands the captives' blood was shed,
The Moon ruled then in land where Christ was born.

But savage man a savage God beheld,
'Till o'er the earth was certain progress made,
And savage priest in cruelty excelled,
'Gainst those who sought to take away their trade.

"For greater fame of *their most cruel* God,"
The sword, the rack, the gibbet freely plied,
Beneath their feet they truth and mercy trod,
Through "act of fate" by which the victim died.

But acts of faith are but the acts of mind,
Some thoughtful man the multitude would lead,
But when in time the folks are more refined,
Some other man would formulate a creed.

Some private aim each leader had in view,
The lust of pride or great desire of fame.
A change of scene the same acts oft renew,
And streams of blood dispute each holy name.

For history of certain lands will show,
That always cults against each other vied,
No good in one, another cult would know,
To rule by force some certain ones have tried.

The frenzied horde onrushing like a flood,
In firmest faith, lead by man unshod,
Spread o'er the land the unoffending blood,
And thought that they but did the will of God.

Much good I find in worships that are dead,
The honor code, old Roman, we commend,
And Egypt taught that evil we should dread,
And others thought their knowledge to extend.

We have no time for metaphysics now,
Around the earth we must for knowledge seek,
Before some god the human mind must bow,
But where on earth did man with spirit speak?

In all the lands that lie beneath the sun,
I view the cults as they arise and fall,
The ruined shrines where yet sweet waters run,
And priestly homes where loathsome creatures crawl.

I see once more the grand old temples built,
The stately tread of long drawn priestly train,
Upon the stream the rich libation spilt,
The victim bound and on the altar slain.

In thunder tones the Druids received reply,
From smoking mount the Holy Man came down,
On guilded forms some nations did rely,
In other lands the Prophet had renown.

I view a shrine upon a rising hill,
A throng awaits within the courts below,
I hear a bell that tinkles and is still—
Thus saith the Lord, Jehovah's will they know.

I stand beneath Saint Peter's lofty dome,
Where Christian Church and Pagan Temple blend,
All earth awaits the Oracle of Rome,
Where pretence dwells, the search for truth must end.

The crescent yet does with the Cross contend,
That from beyond it had the latest news,
But each of these the Deity offend,
Is earnest thought of all the faithful Jews.

The ancient priests a useful part did play,
Who taught mankind in reverence to bow,
But Nature's God is just as great today,
As when they kneeled to gods discarded now

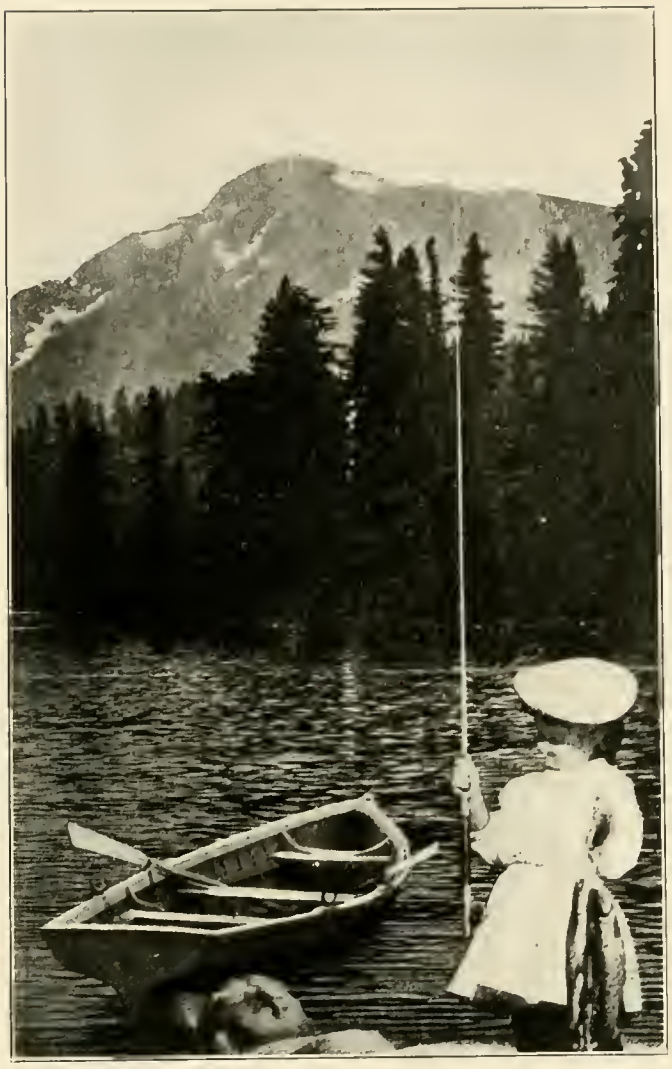
SUPERSTITION

A false belief we superstition call,
A worthless thought by sophistry instilled,
Untenable, a supposition all,
That acts or prayers could change what God has willed.

But hope and love and superstitious hate,
Have been the keys on which ambition played.
And one of these resigned to cruel fate,
Those who convinced of death were not afraid.

But all the words reflecting abstract thought,
May each receive another meaning quite,
So when a faith with superstition fought,
We shield their crimes with mercy's mantle white.

The mind in youth is like unwritten page,
Created thus impressions to receive,
And nations oft in cruel wars engage,
For each was taught that which they should believe.



'Tis very hard for youth aside to cast
The worthless thoughts that venal priests have taught.
To search the page and find the truth at last,
And view the facts with free, untrammeled thought.

They give no proof of that which they assert,
Save ghostly tales of the unletttered past,
To bolster kings they did their force exert,
Respect for kings and priests is fading fast.

For from the truth must superstition flee,
As from the light the midnight darkness fades.
And when the mind from sophistry is free,
Review the God who does all things pervade.

When earth was plunged in darkest pagan night.
The blood of men and beast was freely shed.
We almost view the Aztec's cruel rite;
In other lands the human victim bled.

The Druid's sharp knife cut out the quivering heart,
Jehovah's love with blood was freely bought.
The Greek bowed down before a thing of art,
And India bled beneath the Juggernaut.

The Stylus Saint upon his pillow stood,
In Summer's heat and through the Winter's cold.
The Hermit hid within the cave or wood,
And some with man no intercourse would hold.

And men on foot once sought the Holy Land,
Some did prostrate before the sacred glow.
Some seek a grave beyond Arabia's sand,
And millions bow where sacred waters flow.

And sacred bones are in some places shown,
Where holy man a high position takes.
And sacred beasts in distant lands were known,
There is a land where yet they worship snakes.

All kinds of gods the mind of man relieved,
The black, the white, and Satan they have tried;
The god of War the greatest praise received,
The god of Peace, so called, they crucified.

What simple things the thoughtless ones impress,
A Crescent Moon, a Cross, or Voodoo charm,
Some sacred bones or just a holy dress,
A dancing priest or e'en a withered arm.

But once impressed by symbols of this kind,
The mind to it will most securely tie,
So often then in history we find,
To prove their cause that men would freely die.

Among the Seers can there a one be true?
In every cult the martyr always bleeds,
Believed by faith, we may this path pursue,
For it supplies what superstition needs.

FAITH

From Moslem's Tomb and from the Peaceful Cross,
Two streams of blood have now for ages flowed,
And nations yet will greatly feel the loss,
And reap the fruits that superstition sowed.

The Cross at first by peaceful means was lead,
To every land where savage man could dwell,
But when in pride it stalked with stately tread,
It ruled by crimes that blushed the fiends of Hell.

'Twas better far the Moslem's sword to feel,
Than suffer death by Christian dragonade,
The strong in faith the martyr's faith did seal,
The weak through fear a good confession made.

Because they had their mind from dogma freed,
And claimed there was no reason they could find,
Why Holy Pope and Christian King agreed
Should rule the earth, in life or death could bind.

This bloated priest to this conclusion came,
And horrid crimes in distant lands were seen
Where crazy Monks did seek to praise the name
And spread the faith of dreaming Nazarene.

The Pope and King did every effort bend,
To crush the will and freedom of mankind,
For fraud and force alone can gain their end,
When ignorance and superstition bind.

The man who once the soil of Judah trod,
Sought but to gain a universal peace,
The love of man, the fatherhood of God,
Nor sanction crime that might his fame increase.

The Christian Faith is facile to explain,
Three Gods in one and with the Virgin four,
A comma split the Holy Church in twain,
And each one claims the key to Golden Door.

Confession proved to be a mine of gold,
For there are those who must their secrets tell,
To whom the priest his prayers have ever sold—
A profit all to those to chance to sell.

With bleeding Christ on Cross with jewels set
And sacred heart, it is a priestly plan,
And weeping maids their faces always wet,
They sought to rule the attributes of man.

The vulgar herd by symbols thus misled,
Soon back in worse than pagan darkness sank,
And Bruno's flesh to martyrs' flame was fed,
As Socrates the fatal hemlock drank.

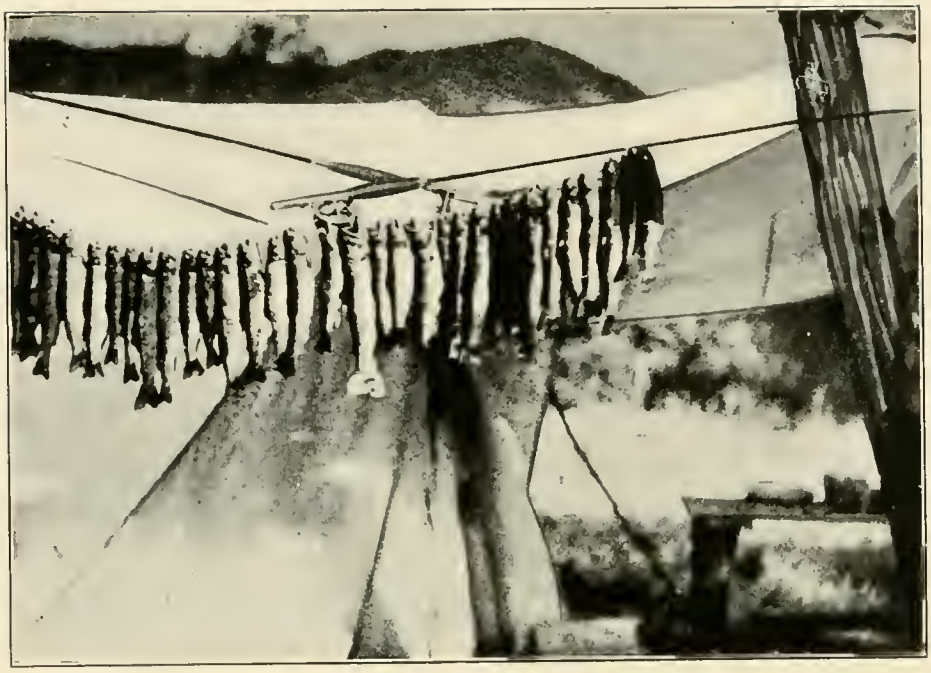
Thank God these things have nearly passed away,
The blighting hand of bigotry is dead,
Nor saints nor fiend no more pollute the day,
Before the light they all from earth have fled.

The Moslems' Faith was spread by sword and flame,
From shores of Spain to Persia's blood-soaked soil,
They were compelled to speak the Prophet's name.
Or by the sword were freed from earthly toil.

More merciful than Christian cult or Jew,
They tortured none who did obstruct their way,
The savage horde was but a faithful crew,
Whose only law was that they should obey.

There was no sin for which they might atone,
By paying gold to some old dotard priest,
There was but one between them and the Throne
Where they would rest, with black-eyed houris feast.

They worshiped God, the only God Supreme,
Their Prophet would their future life provide
From Christian rule they would the earth redeem,
The infidels should not with them abide.



Their true belief that justice is but force,
And earth should bend unto the Prophet's will.
Who act for faith can suffer no remorse,
To prove their cause their duty was to kill.

The multitude by some fanatic led,
The promise of licentious life to bind,
The impure faith of camel driver's spread,
And sought at once a martyr's grave to find.

For martyrs all for faith will freely bleed,
Perhaps it is the proper thing to do,
The Moslem's Faith was very strong in deed,
If his was false the other must be too.

For faith is hope of that which those desire,
Which they conclude by evidence unseen,
Is granted them by universal fire,
Through one who stands, as they suppose, between.

Thus spake the man who led the Christian van,
A true belief is springing up today,
'Tis Nature's God, and not the God of man,
Who did create and may sweep all away.

Belief is knowledge of a thing unseen,
Where certain proof as evidence is given,
To say there is or must be then I ween,
Is not a proof of either Hell or Heaven.

To savage man whose mind is quite untaught,
No faith to him can, therefore, be allowed,
From Nature's God he favors oft has sought,
And found in them within the wind or cloud.

As Moses held the gilded snake on rod,
Some view in faith their Savior on the tree,
And millions find a most revengeful God
Where Budda taught eternal rest must be.

THE ARGUMENT

The boast of priests, how silly now appears,
Who used to tell what God to them did say,
For what is man with all his hopes and fears,
The Shade of Smoke on pleasant Summer day.

The will of God the priests did first translate,
Accepting bribes that would placate their wrath,
The sacrifice has long been out of date,
But yet the priests have found another path.

The gods at first the blood of men required,
And then they changed, accepting fruits and meat,
When money came, it was the thing desired
And now the priests can purchase what they eat.

They ruled mankind with knowledge, crime, and sleight,
And acted well the part they had to play,
And did pretend that God gave them the right
To punish those who would not them obey.

We fear no more the thunders of the Church,
Loyola's flames on earth no longer burn,
The Puritans do not for witch-marks search,
And faithless kings no faithful titles earn.

Deceive not God, who knows your inmost thought.
In darkened ways as works the par-blind mole,
By intoned prayers that are by It unsought,
Or mytered head or rich embroidered stole.

How could the One whose thought created all,
Descend to curse the worm It did create,
How foolish is the tale of Adam's fall,
It must have willed what was to be his fate.

But we have facts that give us broader views,
Which sages all for unknown ages sought,
Reject for cause the legends of the Jews,
Accept the truth wherever truth is taught.

If we have souls, God did those souls create,
And It will care for all things that exist,
And for its care Itself will compensate,
Why then should we endeavor to assist?

But there are those, who teaching, may believe
That to redeem debased and fallen man,
God caused on earth a virgin to conceive,
Which some accept, for there are those who can.

God must have seen the last as well as first,
The long drawn time of those unnumbered years,
It would not make a thing that was accurst,
On this account shed no repenting tears.

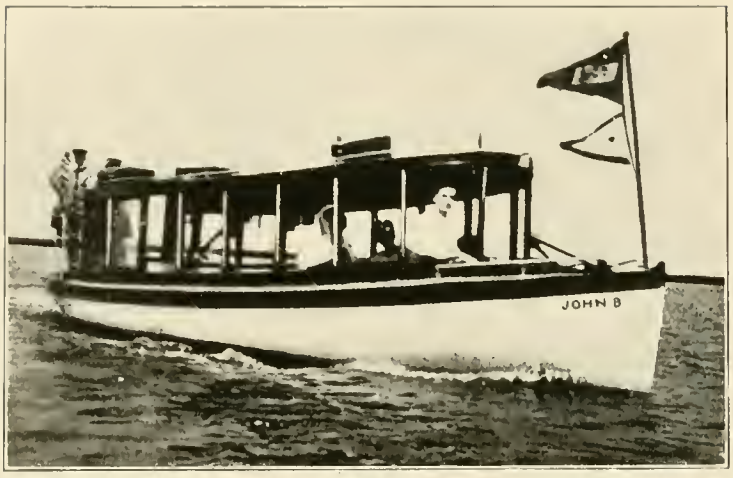
On nature's laws we should our thoughts bestow,
For nature's God will not Its secrets tell,
Its awful form the mind may never know,
Eternal truth may choose alone to dwell.

Because the earth on which we live is small.
And universe to God is but a span,
No voice from clouds I think did ever call.
Or womb conceive except by nature's plan.

God does not care for little trifling things,
Such as the prayers of men concerning It,
Where is the place where conscience ever stings,
Or tuneful saints a harping ever sit?

Among the stars I often search in vain,
To find the place of that eternal rest,
Where angels guard and join in the refrain,
And weary souls now wander with the blest.

I strive to see beyond the tearful pale,
The Spiritland that others say they saw,
The future life seems but an idle tale,
Except the one of nature's changeless law



For we can view the blue vault all around,
We cannot see the place that is below,
And if above no Spiritland is found,
Where do the priests the evil spirits stow?

It must be thus, the argument to suit,
For every cult two spirit lands must find,
This is the fact, 'tis needless to dispute,
If we leave earth we must leave Hell behind.

Unlike the men who Christian Science teach,
And tell a fool that he is almost God,
The priestly tribe their mediation preach,
And use their Hell as teachers use the rod.

Let crazy monks and hopeless bigots prate,
Of their unjust and cruel God revealed,
The only One whom we should contemplate,
Is Nature's God in love from us concealed.

For every age has groped in darkest night,
And every one some spirit did extoll;
Beyond the tomb they found no certain light,
Nor did they solve the problem of the soul.

For none of those who sleep did ever wake,
Although the priests did some false records keep,
Who guards us all, good care of soul will take
Or death may be an everlasting sleep.

For everything by Nature's God was planned,
And certain things were hidden from our sight,
They may be such we could not understand,
And watch and pray may lead us to the light.

Let honor, truth and justice be your guide,
Was what was taught by Man from Gallilee.
A mutual love, lay envy all aside,
Which proves the man philosopher to be.

For Peace on Earth would surely follow then,
And truth and hope with honor would abide,
And love would be the common law of men,
And charity would cover all beside.

For God all things in plenty does provide,
It does not care to whom they are disbursed,
And man with man in fairness should divide,
By greed alone he only has been cursed.

For man on man for happiness depends,
And honor is the simplest rule of faith,
Peace comes to him who helping hand extends,
And future life may be the aftermath.

And thus concludes the patient, searching clod,
Who in these lines does history review,
While musing here alone with Nature's God,
And Nature's God the only God he knew.

Unhappy man, from youth condemned to death,
Remember 'tis the universal fate,
The flesh must die, the soul may be the breath,
We live once more in that which we create.

CLOSING LINES

Far down the vale where now the Greater Bear
Does truly point the silent flight of time,
I quickly note upon the rising air
A sudden change that marks a mountain climb.

The coming storm now shakes the distant trees,
The moaning wind in ranks the clouds array
A spicy scent comes floating on the breeze,
The thunders roll and zigzag lightnings play.

The mournful hymn brings back that peaceful rest,
To only those whom nature loves it can,
'Tis nature's voice along the mountain crest
That earnest breathes a prayer for erring man.

The moon has set behind the western hills,
The distant scene is shrouding from the view,
And darkness first the rugged canon fills,
As night around her sable curtains drew.

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